

Power Of Partnership

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The Society of Government Travel Professionals (SGTP), a national organization for both Federal and State travel-related procurement, will award the State of Colorado Travel Management Program, with its *Certificate of Achievement*, one of two awards given annually to state government entities that provide travel-related services. Lenora Kingston, Manager of the program received an award from the SGTP two years ago for best government travel management program in the United States and now will be awarded this year for her *Power of Partnership* collective action initiative. Ms. Kingston competed against the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury, the U.S. Dept. of Justice and 50 other states for this prestigious honor. The award presentation will take place, February 9, 2007 in Alexandria, Virginia.

Not only has Lenora Kingston partnered with other state travel program directors, but also within her direct scope of responsibility. She remains vigilant about controlling price increases to the State's program members, which include other state agencies, institutions of higher education and certain participating political subdivisions, an estimated 60,000+ state employees. The total funds managed through this program are estimated at \$30M per year.

One of several business travel partners, who contribute to the success of the State of Colorado travel program are the 11 travel agencies, who have competed in a Request for Proposal bid to participate in this program. The travel agency personnel support State employees as they embark on their various business-related travel, which offer deeper discounts than internet ticketing and can respond in real time to travel emergencies, should they arise (remember Denver International Airport on December 20, 2006?)

When the major airlines announced a fare increase that would be imposed on each leg of a travel itinerary, but offered a discounted increase for tickets booked through travel agency vendors, it became necessary for the state-contracted vendors to re-negotiate their agreements. There was a small window of opportunity to meet with the eleven businesses to consolidate a response to a change implemented during the third quarter of 2006, to take effect September 1, 2006.

The ticketing increase of \$3.50 per travel segment (or leg of a trip, that includes a take-off and a landing), on average for the state would increase a single ticket by \$10.50, with three connecting flights each way. For a single trip this fee increase does not seem to amount to very much money. However, given the number of tickets that are booked each year, an estimated 41,000+ tickets, the fee increase could be as high as \$430,000. Ms Kingston, through a collective effort with the state travel agency vendors negotiated the fee increase down to \$.80 per travel segment, so that the airline fare increase would have a lesser impact—one that was barely noticed—a savings to the State of over \$328,000 in a single year.

It's no wonder that Ms. Kingston is a leader in her field, since she is ever watchful and aware of the changing climate within the industry and is not afraid to respond with a quick and thoughtful intervention, which ultimately benefits the citizens of the State of Colorado. This Certificate of Achievement is well-deserved, indeed.